

A
L E T T E R

To the REVEREND

Mr. THOMAS CHURCH, M.A.

Vicar of BATTERSEA, and Prebendary
of St. PAUL's;

I N

A N S W E R

T O H I S

Serious and Expostulatory LETTER

T O T H E

Rev^d. Mr. *George Whitefield*,

On Occasion of his late LETTER to the Bishop
of *London*, and other Bishops.

By GEORGE WHITEFIELD, A. B.
late of *Pembroke-College*, OXFORD.

L O N D O N :

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A
L E T T E R

TO the REVEREND

Mr. *Thomas Church*, M. A.

LONDON, *May* 22d. 1744.

Rev'd SIR,

I Have read your expostulatory Letter, and thank you for prefixing your Name—Had the Author of the Observations been so ingenuous, he wou'd have saved you and me some Trouble; But as he hath not, and the Pamphlet was published in such a Way, I cannot think myself justly chargeable with Ill-manners or Censoriousness, for treating him and their Lordships concerned, in the Manner I have done. Our Saviour dealt always very plainly with the Rulers of the *Jewish Church*; and when one was offended, and said, *Master, thus saying, thou reproachest us also*, he was so far from recanting, that

he said, *and woe unto you also ye Lawyers—*
 In the same Spirit the Proto-martyr Stephen
 addressed himself to the *Jewish Sanbedrin*,
 and said unto them, *Ye stiff-necked and un-*
circumcised in Hearts and Ears, ye do always
resist the Holy Ghost ; as your Fathers did, so
also do ye. And however shocking, Rev'd
 Sir, it may appear to you, (Page 43d of your
 Letter) for us to urge our Lord's Example and
 his blessed Apostles, yet I think it quite consist-
 ent for a Minister, who has received an Apostoli-
 cal Commission at his Ordination, *Receive thou*
the Holy Ghost now committed unto thee by the Im-
position of our Hands, &c. to make use of the
 Example of our Lord and his Apostles, in Vindi-
 cation of his Conduct, because Christ left us an
 Example, that we might follow his Steps ; and
 we are called to be Followers of the Apostles,
 as they were of Jesus Christ—I know not
 how to give flattering Titles, and therefore
 must stand to it, that they are *false Witnesses*,
 however dignified or distinguished, and lay
to my Charge a Thing that I know not, who
 tax me with being an *open Desier of Govern-*
ment for preaching in the Fields—Neither do
 I think I have wronged the Author of the
 Observations at all, by insinuating, “ That
 “ the Design and Scope of this Pamphlet
 “ was to represent the Proceedings of the
 “ Methodists as dangerous to the Church
 “ and State, in order to procure an Act of
 “ Par-

“ Parliament against them, or oblige them
 “ to secure themselves by turning Dissenters.”
 That this was his Drift, (at least that he
 intended to move the Government against the
 Methodists in general, and me in particular)
 I think appears quite plain from a little Two-
 penny Paper lately published, (I suppose by
 the same anonymous Author) wherein he
 declares, “ That tho’ Mr. *Whitefield* has plead-
 “ ed in behalf of the Methodists, that they are
 “ an harmless and loyal People, yet 1st. He
 “ cannot possibly be supposed to know all
 “ the Persons, or even one Tenth Part of
 “ those present at his Meetings of 30, 50, or
 “ 80000—2^d. When he appoints or holds a
 “ Meeting, all People are at Liberty to come,
 “ and to carry on such Purposes as they
 “ think proper—3^d. Such a free and safe
 “ Resort for great Multitudes to one Place,
 “ subject to no Controul or Examination, is
 “ doubtless a great Opportunity put into the
 “ Hands of seditious Persons to raise Distur-
 “ bances.” He adds, “ How consistently
 “ with the Act of Toleration, or with what
 “ Safety to the Public, these Field-preachings
 “ may be continued let the World judge.” If
 this be not intended to move the Government
 against me, surely there was never a Motion
 made against any Man living ; but with what
 little Shew of true Reasoning I need not men-
 tion—Let the World judge.

Here

Here lies the Point, Rev'd Sir : The Generality of the Clergy are offended in their Hearts, that his Majesty is so mild towards his harmless and loyal People the Methodists. They have denied the Methodist Preachers the Use of their Churches, and think if Field-preaching was put a Stop to, Methodism, as they term it, wou'd be less extensive. But were they to gain their Point, and the Preachers to be bound, yet perhaps after all they wou'd find themselves mistaken, for the Word of God wou'd not be bound—And I remember a Saying of the then Lord Chancellor to that holy Martyr *Bradford*, “ Thou hast done
 “ more Hurt (as he called it) by thy Letters
 “ and Exhortations since thou hast been in
 “ Prison, than thou ever didst before.”
 However this be, Field-preaching is at present the Clergy's Eye-fore—Hence they raise a Clamour that it is unlawful—We deny it--- We say the Act of Toleration urged against us is nothing to the Purpose, for we are true Members of the establish'd Church ; and that if we were not (*quod magno mercen- ter Atridæ*) yet the Trial of *Mede* and *Pen* is an adjudged Case. But still if you or any other Person please to move for an Information against me for preaching in a Field, or a Street, tho' I purpose to go abroad shortly, yet I shall think it my Duty to stay some Time, to
 — make

make a legal Defence---But if not, henceforward whatever Questions may be put to me in Print, about the Lawfulness of Field-preaching, they will lie unanswered.

Not that I think it is barely Field-preaching that gives the generality of the Clergy such Offence---No, it is the Doctrine that I preach there that is the grand Cause of their contending with me. You are pleased, Rev'd Sir, to say (Page 39th) " that I have revived " the old *Calvinistical* Disputes concerning " Predestination, &c. (I suppose you mean Justification by Faith alone, the imputed Righteousness of Jesus Christ, Man's utter Inability to turn to God, or to do good Works, &c.) " which you say had happily " slept for so many Years."---But if this be my Shame, I glory in it---For what is this but reviving the essential Articles of the Church of *England*, which undoubtedly are *Calvinistical*, and which, by your own Confession, have happily slept for so many Years? This is too true---But however you may count this a Happiness, yet in my Opinion it is one of the greatest Judgments that has befallen our Nation---And if it had not been for the Remnant of Free-Grace, Dissenting Ministers, (stiled by the Author of the Observations, Dissenting Teachers) and the little Flock of the Methodist Preachers, that the Lord Jesus has

has raised up and preserved amongst us, many of the essential Doctrines of the Articles of the Church of *England* might have, as you term it, happily slept many Years more.

These, Rev'd Sir, are the real Sentiments of my Heart---I think they are founded on Truth and Soberness---And if so, blame me not, as you do (Page 21st) for comparing the Church of *England*, as it now subsists, to a *leaky Ship*---For is it not too evident that she is not only *leaky*, but really *sinking*, when several of the Right Reverend the Bishops, and a Prebendary of *St. Pauls*, can openly plead for Works being a Condition of our Justification in the Sight of God? This was the particular Charge my Lord of *London* gave his Clergy in his last Pastoral Letter, viz. so to explain the Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, as not to exclude good Works from being a Condition of our Justification---Was the great Apostle of the *Gentiles* now living, what Anathema's wou'd he pronounce against such *Judaizing* Doctrine? Was *Luther* on Earth, how wou'd he thunder against such a Charge? For he calls Justification by Faith alone, *Articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ*---This is the great fundamental Point in which we differ from the Church of *Rome*---This is the grand Point of Contention between the Generality of the established

blished Clergy, and the Methodist Preachers:
 We plead for free Justification in the Sight of
 God by Faith alone, in the imputed Right-
 eousness of Jesus Christ, without any Re-
 gard to Works past, present, or to come--
 You (*Bellarmino* like) are for making your
 Works *Conditions*, (Page 17th) “ And join-
 “ ing your honest, tho’ imperfect Endeavours
 “ to serve and please your Maker, with a
 “ hearty Trust and Confidence in his ever-
 “ lasting Mercies,” (Page 42.) You say, (Page
 “ 58th) we are very far from building *wholly*
 “ on our Morality;” we say, our Morality
 is not to be built on at all, but that *Christ is*
the End of the Law for Righteousness to every
one that believeth--- This, you think, is one
 of my Errors---But if it be an Error, it is
 a Scriptural Error; and so plainly taught in
 the eleventh Article of our Church, that he
 that runs may read: And however you may
 blame me for insinuating, “ That some of
 “ the Clergy may adhere to his Majesty
 “ only for his Preferment, and consequently
 “ not appear altogether so hearty in a Time
 “ of Danger;” yet I cannot think it an In-
 stance of hard-judging at all---For if Persons
 can deliberately subscribe to the Doctrines of
 Justification by Faith alone, and other Arti-
 cles that are purely *Calvinistical*, yet so
 explain them away as plainly to prove they
 scarce believe a Word of them, I shou’d not

wonder if they turn'd *Jacobites*, or went over to the Pretender, whenever they saw it suited their worldly Interest so to do.

That I am not alone in my Opinion, give me leave, Rev'd Sir, to transcribe a Passage I lately met with in the latter End of a Book entitled, *The Honeycomb of Free Justification*, written by one Mr. *Eaton*, A. M. of *Trinity College* in *Cambridge*, printed at *London* in the Year 1642.

“ Free Justification was first enjoined to
 “ be diligently taught for the Reformation
 “ of the Church, by King *Henry VIII.* but
 “ was by King *Edward VI.* and Queen
 “ *Elizabeth* principally established by Par-
 “ liament, and singled out from all the rest
 “ of the established Articles of Religion;
 “ and reduced into Sermons and Homilies
 “ to be (after the People's Sight of their
 “ lost Estate, and woeful Misery by Sin)
 “ principally taught, and chiefly known and
 “ understood of all the Subjects and Com-
 “ mons of the Land for these four Causes--

1st. “ Because it is the only immediate
 “ Cause and Means of our Peace with God---
 “ For being justified by Faith we have Peace
 “ with God, *Rom. v. 1.* and our Assurance of
 “ free Salvation by Jesus Christ, and is there-

(II)

“ fore called the Justification of Life, *Rom.* 18,
“ *For whom God justifieth, them be also glori-*
“ *fieth,* *Rom.* viii. 30.

2d. “ Because it is the Ordinance of God
“ (quite contrary to the Judgment of *Popish*
“ carnal Reason) that powerfully causeth
“ People to leave their Sins, and live a true
“ sanctify’d and godly Life---*Titus* ii. 11 to
“ 15.---*Rom.* 5th and 6th Chapter.

3d. “ Because it is the chiefest Cause and
“ Means to discover and *suppress the* Romish
“ *Antichrist, Popery, &c.* and *all other Su-*
“ *perstitions, Sects, Errors and Schisms* out
“ of the Land; and to establish Unity, Peace
“ and Concord in Matters of Religion, and
“ of *Assurance* of free Salvation, and makes
“ every Man to keep in a lawful Vocation,
“ and to do it profitably in Love.---*Gal.*
“ v. 13.

4th. “ To direct Ministers *ὀρθοποδεῖν* to
“ go with a right Foot to the Truth of the
“ Gospel, *Gal.* ii. 14. in sound Preaching,
“ and pure declaring of the Word of God,
“ by true Faith of free Justification, because
“ (saith the established Doctrine of our
“ Church) sincere Preachers ever were, and
“ ever shall be *but a few*; and their preach-
“ ing of God’s Word most sincere in the Be-

“ ginning, by Proceſs of Time waxeth leſs
 “ and leſs pure, and after is corrupt, and
 “ laſt of all quite laid down, and left off;
 “ becauſe free Juſtification is a Doctrin
 “ hardly learned in a Church, and ſoon loſt
 “ again, *Gal. i. 6.* and yet is the true
 “ *Strength, Happineſs and Safety of the*
 “ *whole Land, Iſaiab lxii. 1---6.*”

“ Hereupon the 5th Part of the Sermon
 “ againſt Diſobedience and Rebellion, eſta-
 “ bliſhed by *Queen Elizabeth*, teacheth the
 “ Commons, that ſuch Biſhops or eccleſiaſti-
 “ cal Perſons, as by Pride and ambitious
 “ Rule, do by Terms of Error, Schiſm, or
 “ Hereſy, *binder this main Light of God's*
 “ *Word from the People, are the chiefeſt*
 “ *Traytors in the Land:* And the 6th and
 “ laſt Part largely teacheth, that ſuch Sub-
 “ jects and Commons to whom through Ig-
 “ norance of God's Word, this Light of
 “ Righteouſneſs, and this Sun of Under-
 “ ſtanding doth not ſhine, although they
 “ may bragg, as did ſometimes the *Jewiſh*
 “ Clergy and People, that they cannot lack
 “ Knowledge, yet are ſuch by their blind
 “ dead Faith, *Traytors to God, Traytors to*
 “ *their King, Traytors to their own Souls*
 “ *and Bodies, and Traytors to the whole Land*
 “ *and Country.*”

Thus.

Thus writes that good Man Mr. *Eaton*---
 I leave you, Rev'd Sir, to make what use of
 it you please---You see we have both human
 as well as divine Authority on our Side---And
 yet we are looked upon as erroneous, and are
 accordingly denied the Churches: And what
 for? Even for preaching up the Doctrine of
 Justification by Faith alone; for which the
 glorious Martyrs of the Church of *England*
 burnt in *Smithfield*---If this be not like *Nero's*
 setting *Rome* on Fire, and then charging it
 upon the Christians, I know not what is.

This is really, Rev'd Sir, the Truth of
 the Case.—However we are willing to fre-
 quent the Church, and receive the holy Sa-
 crament, if the Clergy please to give us Leave.
 This I think we may do, without being
 guilty of the Inconsistency you charge us
 with (Page 29th) because in the 26th Arti-
 cle of our Church we are taught, “ Although
 “ in the visible Church the Evil be ever
 “ mingled with the good, and sometime
 “ the Evil have chief Authority in the Mi-
 “ nistration of the Word and Sacraments :
 “ Yet, forasmuch as they do not the same
 “ in their own Name, but in Christ's, and
 “ do minister by his Commission and Autho-
 “ rity, we may use their Ministry, both in
 “ hearing the Word of God, and in receiv-
 “ ing of the Sacraments : Neither is the
 “ Effect

“ Effect of Christ’s Ordinance taken away
 “ by their Wickedness, nor the Grace of
 “ God’s Gifts diminished from such, as by
 “ Faith, and rightly do receive the Sacra-
 “ ments ministred unto them, which be ef-
 “ fectual, because of Christ’s Institution and
 “ Promise, although they be ministred by
 “ evil Men.”—This I think a sufficient Vin-
 dication for the Methodists keeping in the
 Church—But if some cannot go thus far,
 or bear to hear the Doctrine of Justi-
 fication by Faith alone continually preached
 against, the Preachers must thank themselves
 if any entirely desert the Church, and run
 to Meeting-houses or elsewhere, to get Food
 for their Souls—For I am perswaded, if the
 Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone be
 banish’d from our Pulpits, People may attend
 to their Lives End, and yet never have the
 whole Council of God (as you think they
 may, Page 50.) declared unto them.

I could enlarge upon this Point, and also
 answer the Charge of Enthusiasm which you
 bring against me in several Parts of your
 Letter—But I willingly omit it, because I shall
 have Occasion to write more explicitly on
 these Points in my second Answer to the *Ob-*
servations—When I shall publish it I know
 not---I have some Reasons for deferring it at
 present—But I assure you, Rev’d Sir, you
 must

must not expect me to treat that anonymous Author with less Justice than in my last—For however worthy perhaps he may be in your Sight, I think I shall prove him to be no better than an unskilful flandering Sophister ; and if a Clergyman, an un-orthodox blind Guide.

As for the Irregularities I have been guilty of in curtailing the Liturgy, or not using the Common-prayer in the Fields, &c. I think it needless to make any Apology till I am called thereto in a judicial Way by my ecclesiastical Superiors—They have Laws and Courts—In and by those, Ecclesiasticks are to be judged ; and I am ready to make a proper Defence, as I mentioned in my Answer to the first Part of the *Observations*, whenever it shall be required at my Hands—Only I would beg Leave to observe, that by calling Extempore Prayer Extempore *Effusions*, you cast a Slur upon the whole Body of Dissenters, and many of the reformed Churches abroad — And as the Free-Grace Dissenters have help'd to keep up the *Calvinistical* Disputes, which you say have happily slept in the established Church for so many Years, was it not for his Majesty's great Kindness, and the Lenity of his Government, they wou'd meet with no better

ter Treatment than the poor Methodists do now.

Indeed you say (Page 41st) “ We do not
 “ oppose or deny the true Scripture Doctrine
 “ concerning these Points, *viz.* Free Justifi-
 “ cation, the New Birth, and the In-dwel-
 “ ling of the Spirit) but only your Account
 “ and explication of them.”—Give me Leave
 therefore, Rev’d Sir, if you are pleased to fa-
 vour me with another Letter, to let me know
 how you explain these important Points, or
 what you can find inconsistent with Scrip-
 ture, or the Articles of the Church of *Eng-
 land*, in those Discourses which I have pub-
 lished, and in which I have endeavoured to
 treat on these Points in an explicate Manner.

I would observe to you, that I wish every
 Non-resident Minister in *England* could give
 as good an Account of their Non-residence as I
 of my Absence from *Savannah*---To satisfy
 you, Rev’d Sir, I will acquaint you with the
 whole---When I first went abroad, I was
 appointed to be Minister of *Frederica*---But
 upon my Arrival in *Georgia*, finding there
 was no Minister at *Savannah*, and no Place
 of Worship at *Frederica*, by the Advice of
 Magistrates and People, I continued at *Sa-
 vannah*, teaching publicly, and from House
 to

to House, and catechising the Children Day by Day, during the whole Time of my first Continuance in *Georgia*; except about a Fortnight in which I went to *Frederica* to visit the People, and to see about building a Church, for which I had given fifty Pounds out of some Money I had collected, and of which I have given a public Account---In about four Months I came over to *England* to receive Priest's Orders, and collect Money for building an Orphan-house---At the Request of many, the Honourable Trustees presented me to the Living of *Savannah*. I accepted it, but refused the Stipend of fifty Pounds *per Annum*, which they generously offer'd me---Neither did I put them to any Expence during my Stay in *England*, where I thought it my Duty to abide till I had collected a sufficient Sum wherewith I might begin the Orphan-house, tho' I should have left *England* sooner, had I not been prevented by the Embargo. However, I was more easy because the Honourable Trustees, I knew, had sent over another Minister, who arrived soon after I left the Colony---Upon my second Arrival at *Georgia*, finding the Care of the Orphan-house, and the Care of the Parish too great a Task for me, I immediately wrote over to the Honourable Trustees to provide another Minister---In the mean while,

D

as

as most of my Parishioners were in Debt, or ready to leave the Colony for want of being employed, and as I believed erecting an Orphan-house would be the *best* Thing I could do for them and their Posterity, I thought it my Duty, from Time to Time, to answer the Invitations that were sent me to preach Christ Jesus in several Parts of *America*, and to raise farther Collections towards carrying on the Orphan-house. The Lord stirred up many to be ready to distribute and willing to communicate on this Occasion. I always came home furnished with Provisions and Money, most of which was expended among the People, and by this Means the Northern Part of the Colony almost entirely subsisted for a considerable Time--This was asserted, not very long ago, before the House of Commons---And now, Sir, judge you whether my Non-Residence was any thing like the Non-Residence of most of the *English* Clergy? When I was absent from my Parishioners, I was not loitering or living at Ease, but preaching Christ Jesus and begging for them and theirs; and when I return'd, it was not to fleece my Flock, and then go and spend it upon my Lusts, or lay it up for a Fortune for myself and Relations. No: Freely as I had receiv'd freely I gave--- And *Therefore when the Ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the Eye*

Eye saw me it gave Witness to me : Because I deliver'd the Poor that cried, and the Fatherless, and him that had none to help him---The Blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me ; and I caused the Widow's Heart to sing for Joy. I am become a Fool in glorying---But you have compelled me---The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ knoweth that I lie not---I fought not theirs, but them---And however you may judge me, (Page 20th) as tho' I chose this Itinerant Way of Preaching for the Sake of Profit, yet I assure you the last Day will prove you and all that are like-minded quite mistaken—I choose a voluntary Poverty—The Love of God and the good of Souls is my only Aim—The Manner of my Call to my present Way of acting, if the Lord gives me Freedom, shall be the Subject of a future Tract—I send you this short Letter, to convince you that I am really willing to give an Answer of the Hope that is in me, with Meekness and Fear. And I shall only add, if you do not like the Example of Gallio (Page 27th) I wou'd humbly recommend to you the Advice of Gamaliel --- “ Refrain from these Men, and let them alone : For if this Council, or this Work be of Men, it will come to nought :

But

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But

((20))

*But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it,
lest haply ye be found even to fight against
God.*

I am,

Rev'd SIR,

Your affectionate Brother

and Servant,

George Whitefield.



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